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ABSTRACT

The goal of building bridges between the Pacific Basin and the United States can be accomplished by focusing on economic considerations. Trade agreements, business and university collaborations, and the mobility of populations between the Pacific Basin and the United States serve as examples of common experiences and cooperation. As education in the workplace is becoming more of an integral part of what is done in the Pacific Basin and in the United States, then building a bridge is not as necessary as "retrofitting" the one that has already been created. The two communities share a similar belief about a correlation between education and economic growth. This commitment to education can be the foundation for retrofitting the bridge between academics and business. To increase production, the way corporations and the people in them are viewed must be changed. Clark's Effective Company Model (1993) defines the relationship between academics and business as one that encourages mutual respect between the two disciplines. The paradigm is based on the fact that teaching and learning is an integrated discipline directly linked to the success of the corporation. It accomplishes the goal of addressing teaching and learning at the workplace in conjunction with creating greater productivity and reinforces the belief that to increase productivity the chief executive officer (CEO) must make a decision representing a commitment to the people in the organization as it identifies the role of the CEO as the primary instructional leader, in an environment where teaching and learning is celebrated and rewarded. (Contains 11 references.) (YLB)

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# RETROFITTING THE BRIDGE BETWEEN ACADEMICS AND BUSINESS: HERE IS HOW IT IS DONE

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In the world of academics and business, there exists stimulating dialogue and energetic inquisitions regarding how to marry the two. Corporations are embarking, as never before, in creative ventures with universities and research labs in an effort to improve products, embrace knowledge, and survive an increasingly competitive market. Numerous individuals in the world of academics have abandoned their ivory towers and finally admitted that they are not the only "keeper" of dreams filled with discovery and invention. In the event that building bridges between the academic and business communities of the Pacific Basin and the United States becomes a reality, then it would be helpful to understand the two communities in regard to either how they are defined or categorized.

While there is some agreement on categorization, it is nearly impossible to define countries with specific descriptors due to their vast diversification. Furthermore, they are changing at such a rapid pace in some instances, that it is impossible to quarantine their status and position. Consequently, the focus will be on categorizing the countries.

To support this position, Cho (1984) suggests that the diversity among the nations of the Pacific Basin permeates their historical, cultural, and linguistic institutions, as well as their economic, social and political organizations. He further suggests that these nations differ in their human and physical resource endowments, demographic characteristics, and industrial structure. (p. 242) For some, the "developed countries" are identified as Australia and New Zealand, while the newly industrialized countries, known more commonly as NICs, include: Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. The Asean 4 are listed as Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal make up the Saarc 5. The Russian Republic more recently has been

counted as a participant. To further complicate matters, the Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference consisting of twenty nations, not all aforementioned, makes up the PECC. Additionally, there exists the Pacific Basin Economic Council better known as the PBEC

Gibney (1992) identifies the role of the PECC to create various task forces to deal with matters such as energy, resources, science and technology, transportation and communication, and trade problems throughout the Pacific Basin. The most noteworthy publicity facing the PBEC occurred recently when China was asked to participate as an "observer" in a meeting in Seoul, South Korea. The delegate representing China felt highly offended that Taiwan, as a standing member of the PBEC, referred to itself as the "Chinese member committee of PBEC in Taipel." China insisted that Taiwan be referred to as "Chinese Member Committee of Taipel" (Magnier, 1993, p. 3).

On the other side of the equation, events such as the formation of the North America Free Trade Agreement, on-going debates regarding international border disputes, American troops on foreign soil, and the United States' role in facing Kim Il Sung, prove to define and diversify the United States. In terms of categorizing the United States however, as it is not a newly industrialized nation, perhaps it would fit best in the "developed nation" category.

The primary criteria for placing nations in certain categories is directly linked to their economic status. This does not indicate that political position and policies do not influence the creation of bridges between the Pacific Basin and the United States. It is certain in fact, that they do. For the sake of simplicity however, the goal of building bridges

between the two communities can be accomplished by focusing on economic considerations and prove quite sufficient for our purposes.

By maintaining this focus, it is easier to face the challenge of discovering common ground between the Pacific Basin and the United States as it relates to business and academics. This is not an easy assignment. Various symposiums and international conferences have been held for this very purpose. One such example occurred in 1992, when a conference, sponsored by the Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning, was held in the state of Kansas to discuss possible strategies for building bridges between academics and business. Although the focus was primarily on the role of institutions of higher education, the conference attendees also considered the role of business. The following questions were addressed: (1) How do institutions in the United States and Asia form meaningful relations? (2) What program innovations exist in internationalizing the curriculum, and (3) What role do business and industry play in internationalizing the curriculum? On the basis of these inquiries, the conference participants determined regretfully that they could not define an international curriculum and that not all international education lies in the domain of the universities (Sheverbush and Smoot, 1992, p. 2).

Perhaps the challenge was too great and the task overwhelming. Nonetheless, a symposium such as this, creates a purpose. It introduces an opportunity to take a closer look at bringing together countries grouped in such a colorful arrangement, as well as providing an opportunity to recognize bridges that already exist. Trade agreements, business and university collaborations, and the mobility of populations between the

Pacific Basin and the United States serve as examples of common experiences and cooperation.

Additionally, individual countries are taking a hard look at themselves and realizing their own transformation from one of an agricultural discipline to industrial. To this end, Krause (1988) reminds us that a company in Taiwan formed a team of workers whose primary responsibility it was to forecast job futures as it relates to this transformation. As an outcome, the team discovered that training was essential to job performance and that there existed a clear correlation between the training of the workforce and economic growth. Furthermore, he reminds us that South Korea declared a national goal that set a standard of 100% literacy for all South Koreans, including adults. As a result of this goal, they attributed the success in the labor intensive manufacturing areas such as textiles and shoes to success in attempting to reach the literacy goal. South Korea also realized that future growth and the future welfare of the people depended on the education of many, not just a few. Hence, we discover a trend of introducing education at the workplace.

In the United States, the idea that educating the workforce is good for economic growth, is becoming a popular idea. Motorola has stood behind its commitment to education at the workplace, and perhaps it is one of the better known corporations to have assumed this position. Just as important however, are smaller companies such as the Will Burt Company in Orville, Ohio headed by Harry Featherstone. Working collectively with the University of Akron, he introduced to his employees various courses intended to educate his employees and improve the working environment. At first, blue print reading and geometric tolerancing formed the curriculum. Further expansion of educational

opportunities for the workforce flowed over into areas of safety, production, training, quality, personnel and costing. Featherstone states, "If you put one dollar in education-properly structured so that people learn and have a goal and a purpose, then you will get back twenty dollars every year" (p. 12). He believes that workplace education has endless positive impacts on all aspects of business, and it serves to remind manufacturing people, of "why they are here."

Further examples are exemplified by Allied Signals, the Cin-Made Corporation in Cincinnati, and Nynex, a regional phone company. Some companies are pursuing this objective with such enthusiasm that they have established programs such as individual training accounts, ITAs, for the sake of setting up funds for individual employees who need to either learn skills to retrain in their existing jobs, or perhaps retraining is necessary to seek jobs elsewhere (Smyth, 1994, p. 70).

As education in the workplace is becoming more of an integral part of what we do in the Pacific Basin and in the United States, then building a bridge is not as necessary as "retrofitting" the one we already have created. As aforementioned, we seem to share a similar belief that there is a correlation between education and economic growth. As General Motors created its own Institute, Pennsylvania State University collaborated with General Electric, and universities in Australia created joint ventures with major corporation, there already exists evidence that there is something quite wonderful that we share in common with one another. This commitment to education is going to become the key to survival. If we are to retrofit the bridge between academics and business between the Pacific Basin and the United States, we have no greater opportunity than to begin with teaching and learning as the foundation for accomplishing this task.

As a starting point, it is imperatives to take a look at the difference between training and education. Knowles (1980) states:

> One of the misconceptions of our cultural heritage is the notion that organizations exist purely to get things done. This is only one of their purposes; it is their work purpose. But every organization is also a social system that serves as an instrument for helping people meet human needs and achieve human goals. In fact, this is the primary purpose for which people take part in the organization. Organizations have a human purpose (p.68).

It is the spirit behind the human purpose that defines education. Training is something else. Like it or not, the idea that employees "need to be trained" versus the belief that employees "will benefit from education", is not the same thing. If a CEO tells the employees, they need to be "trained", it speaks to a sort of manual mentality, the kind that supports what Knowles was suggesting, in that some people believe that organizations exist just to get things done. On the other hand, if it is determined that the employees "need to be educated", this speaks to not only the human spirit, but to idea that an organizations exists for more than just the purpose of getting things done. Education in the workplace can broaden the human dimension by extending the teaching and learning process well beyond the obvious skills needed to improve production, into an area devoted to improving the entire human being. In addition, Senge (1993) describes learning as more than simply acquiring information. He suggests that we must seek personal fulfillment not only outside of work, but in the workplace as well. In fact, he equates learning with fulfillment.

If we truly wish to increase production, then we must change that way we look at corporation and the people in them. We must retrofit the bridge between academics and business, by introducing a paradigm that

embraces teaching and learning at the workplace, and one that is easily understood. Employees can no longer be perceived as individuals expected to do their job without thinking, reasoning, or problem solving. As business organizations transfer their focus from the product to the person employed, the outcome is the personal and professional development of the employee that will lead to continuous improvement in the companies' products and production (Clark, 1993).

Edmonds (1970) took a look at schools as organizations and identified specific variables that led to their success. In his model, "The Effective Schools Model", the emphasis is on teaching and learning. The five basic correlates he identified included: (2) The leadership of the Principal is characterized by substantial attention to the quality of instruction. (2) There is a pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus. (3) An orderly, safe climate exists that is conducive to teaching and learning, (4) Teacher behaviors convey expectations that all students can learn, and (5) Pupil achievement is used as the measure for program evaluation (p. 15).

If applied to the workplace, the aforementioned correlates in a different form, speak to teaching and learning in a manner that brings together academics and business. Clark (1993) created the Effective Company Model to unite the two . The primary purpose of this paradigm is to neatly capture the essence of teaching and learning at the workplace, and to keep it there in its rightful place. It should stand in the company of the belief that employees who learn are not only more productive, but they are guaranteed the right to develop and grow. This model provides a bedding ground for this practice.

Whether the following variables are implemented in the Pacific Basin or in the United States, they will serve to bring together academics and business. Clark's Effective Company Model was inspired by Edmonds (1980), and Featherstone (1994). It would be beneficial to take a closer look at the correlates, and determine how each one addresses teaching and learning at the workplace.

The variables included in this paradigm are intended to become a part of the corporate culture in the way people think, perform, and feel. More importantly they are designed to introduce to the workplace, a new way of looking at employee growth as it applies to economic gain. The commitment of the organization who adopts this model goes beyond that of simply following a sequence of recommended practices. Clark's Effective Model defines the relationship between academics and business as one that honors mutual respect between the two disciplines, enunciated by a true celebration for teaching and learning. The correlates and a brief explanation follow:

## THERE IS A CLEAR MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the mission statement is to acknowledge the value of teaching and learning at the workplace. The exact wording of the mission statement is not intended to compromise the productive side of the organization's goal. It is instead intended to marry the concept of production with the commitment to teaching and learning. Depending on the personality profile of the corporation, the words must come from the people who live and work in the organization.

## THERE EXISTS A BELIEF IN THE COMPANY THAT ALL EMPLOYEES CAN PRODUCE

Without this belief, there is no room for recognizing employees as having worth. A better way of explaining this correlate is to ask the question: If you can identify employees in the corporation who are not producing, then why are they there?

## THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CEO IS CHARACTERIZED BY SUBSTANTIAL ATTENTION TO THE QUALITY OF IMPROVED PERFORMANCE DEMONSTRATED BY THE ABILITY TO EDUCATE

Every time a CEO sends a message to an employee, he/she is in the position to educate. If the CEO can conceptualize their role as instructional leader, "educating" will replace "telling." How the CEO comes to appreciate his/her role as educator and gets in touch with the educator part of him/herself, depends on whether or not the CEO sees him/herself as a "teller" or a "teacher."

## THERE IS A PERVASIVE AND BROADLY UNDERSTOOD EMPLOYEE IMPROVEMENT FOCUS THAT EMBRACES TEACHING AND LEARNING

This variable requires the entire organization and everyone in it to be dedicated to the idea that "teaching and learning" is a good thing. It positions this commitment on center stage and keeps it there. Whether in

developing employee evaluation procedures, redefining organizational goals, or creating a new direction in product lines, the idea that personal growth and learning are directly linked to the success of the organization, is imperative. Questions should be asked such as: (1) What do we need to learn to get this idea going? (2) What do we need to learn in order to keep it going? and (3) What do we need to learn to improve it?

## AN ORDERLY AND SAFE CLIMATE EXISTS THAT IS CONDUCIVE TO ON-THE-JOB EDUCATION

In order for the organization to become a teaching and learning community, the element of safety must be present. Safety in this case, is not only defined in the physical sense, but in the emotional and social dimension as well. If people in an organization are not given a "safe" environment for growing, discovering, and producing, they will cease to grow, discover, and produce.

## EMPLOYEE ACHIEVEMENT AND GROWTH IS USED AS A MEASURE FOR PRODUCT EVALUATION

The purpose of this variable is obvious. If production is down, then the question needs to be asked: What is it that the employee needs to learn in order for production to increase? Perhaps, it is as simple as learning how to read a blueprint, or as complex as learning a new language in order to communicate with fellow employees. An attempt should be made to introduce continuous educational opportunities to the workforce. A method of determining the correlation between employee achievement and growth and its relationship to product evaluation, should be

established. This comparison helps to identify the connection between "learning" and "production".

## A POSITIVE COMPANY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP IS DEVELOPED

It is the responsibility of the company to educate the community regarding its product and purpose. Getting to know the community by engaging the values of the community and the people in it, leads to a positive company and community relationship. The company becomes the educator regarding who it is, what it does, and whom it benefits. More than one company has failed, due to its lack of a commitment to a positive relationship with the community it serves.

## INCREASED SUCCESS IS DIRECTLY LINKED TO THE PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS OF THE EMPLOYEES IN AN ENVIRONMENT OPEN TO DEVELOPING AND REWARDING THIS SKILL

Employees who are learning in an environment that loves to teach, come to know problem solving as second nature. This leads to increased productivity directly linked to the problem solving skills of the employees.

In conclusion, this paradigm is based on the fact that teaching and learning is an integrated discipline directly linked to the success of the corporation. The language of this model serves to bring together the world of academics and business in a manner that retrofits the bridge between

the two. Whether in the Pacific Basin or in the United States, the current trend is to celebrate education in the workplace and recognize its worth.

Clark's Effective Company Model accomplishes the goal of addressing teaching and learning at the workplace in conjunction with creating greater productivity. It manages to capture the human spirit that invites learning into its circle so that problem solving and discovery complement productivity.

This paradigm also reinforces the belief that in order to increase productivity, a decision needs to be made on the part of the CEO. This decision represents a commitment to the people in the organization as it identifies the role of the CEO as the primary instructional leader, in an environment where teaching and learning is celebrated and rewarded. The strength of this model is that it crosses cultural barriers, falls in line with an already existing practice, and adds meaning to the word "productivity." Retrofitting the bridge between academics and business between the Pacific Basin and the United States is based, in this case, on the assumption that healthy organizations recognize that coupling productivity with a commitment to teaching and learning, is a very good idea.

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